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MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Paul Galbenski, 2011-2012 Michigan Teacher of the Year

SUBJECT: December - Teacher of the Year Report

On Campus at OSTC-SE - Adaptive Schools

As schools across the state work on school improvement goals and plans to increase student achievement, Oakland Schools is also providing professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff to implement the Adaptive School model. According to Mr. Jay McTighe, "The focus of the Adaptive School model is to address the essential process aspects of school culture, community, and communications that are too often overlooked in the frenzy to address the programmatic or structural aspects of educational improvement." I was fortunate to be selected as a participant in the four-day Adaptive School professional development training. The training provided participants with a better understanding of the dynamics of school culture, adult learning, collaboration, and the process of facilitating educational change. In my role as a teacher-leader within Oakland Schools, one of the most valuable aspects of this training has been learning several protocols and tools to facilitate dialogue and discussion among staff members. As authors Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman indicate, "Leadership is important and the most effective leadership is informed, deeply developed, and widely distributed." Garmston and Wellman also state, "In the work of school improvement, human energy matters as much as the elements of good management. Maybe more." I truly believe that as we implement and live the Adaptive School model, we all will become better leaders and collaborators, thus providing a better educational learning experience for our students.

As MTOY - Oakland County Diversity Forum

In early November, I had the pleasure of participating in the very first Oakland County Diversity Forum hosted at the Birmingham Conference Center. This diversity forum represented a state-wide collaboration initiated by students. I was invited to this forum by Harrison Shelby who attends my Business, Management, Marketing and Technology program at Oakland Schools Technical Campus Southeast and is also a student at Oak

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Park High School. Participants gathered to address diversity learning. Students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members engaged in this important work of "Dialogue on Diversity." This forum was a student-driven movement and on May 10, 2011, a group of students presented a draft resolution to the State Board of Education that would support diversity learning in Michigan. Upon approval of the resolution, the Michigan Department of Education asked student representatives, the University of Michigan, Farmington Public Schools, and Oakland Schools to collaborate and create a model community forum that would begin to address the elements of the resolution that could be used in other parts of the state for additional forums.

Four main objectives were the focus of the forum: 1) all Michigan students should have diversity learning in school; 2) all Michigan teachers should be trained to teach and facilitate diversity content; 3) all Michigan curricula should include and accurately represent diverse backgrounds; and 4) all Michigan students should have a voice in educational policy. The morning consisted of a Student Workshop and an Educator Workshop. In the afternoon, I had the privilege to serve on a panel along with Mr. John Austin, President of the State Board of Education. The panel also included students, administrators, and parents. The day was facilitated by Mr. Larry Thomas, Director of School Quality, Oakland Schools; Dr. Barry Checkoway, Professor, University of Michigan; and Ms. Susan Zurvalec, Superintendent, Farmington School District. It was a wonderful day of interaction among students, teachers, administrators, and community members. One of the most striking elements of the day was that a student, Ashna Khanna of Farmington High School, was the one who championed this very important topic. She had a vision, executed that vision, and made it reality by providing an interactive opportunity to help continue move diversity learning forward in our schools, homes, and neighborhoods. This is a prime example that one person can make a difference!

PBS Teacher Town Hall: American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen!

I had the honor and privilege of participating as a panelist on Detroit Public Television's *Teacher Town Hall* hosted by noted journalist Hari Sreenivasan of *PBS NewsHour* that aired "live" on Friday, November 18. The *Teacher Town Hall* was a Detroit Public Television live broadcast event designed to amplify the voices of teachers about the issue of children dropping out of school and to help propose solutions to improve the graduation rate. Hari did a fantastic job moderating the *American Graduate: Teacher Town Hall* on PBS Detroit! Several topics were discussed, but the focus was on finding solutions to increase the graduation rate in Michigan. We had great dialogue about the challenges we as teachers face on a daily basis, and I hope that we are able to follow-up and find solutions to the several issues discussed on the show. A conversation is the starting point, but change only occurs once solutions are identified and then successfully implemented. I really enjoyed the question and answer session with all of the teachers in the audience and with several members of our Network of Michigan Educators who were in the audience as well. It was an honor to be on the panel with Omari Lewis, Jordan Peshke, and Narmeen Razzaqui. I hope we can keep the conversation going and achieve the goal of the Teacher Town Hall to increase graduate rates throughout the United States! The entire conversation is available on the www.miamericangraduate.org website.

***Eye on Oakland* – Bloomfield Cable TV Show**

During my presentation at a recent Legislative Breakfast in Oakland County, I had the opportunity to meet State Representative Chuck Moss. Outside of his legislative duties, he also co-hosts a cable television show titled *Eye on Oakland* with Oakland County Commissioner Mr. David Potts. He asked me to be on the show and we taped the segment in November. The show is designed to provide interesting, relevant, and timely information about Oakland County's government and politics that will inform, educate, and enlighten. We had a great conversation about Career and Technical Education (CTE) that is occurring in the four technical campuses in Oakland County as well as in many of our Oakland County high schools. We focused on how CTE can increase student achievement and engagement as well as the academic credits that students can earn while attending the technical campuses. Students are not only able to earn globally recognized business and industry certifications, but are also able to earn college credit as well as meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements by taking Algebra II, 12th Grade English and Language Arts, and a fourth Math class offered at the technical campuses. We also discussed the dire need of workers to be trained in the Information Technology (IT) arena. Both Chuck and Dave were very interested in finding out that we provide such training at the technical campuses and our students earn national IT certifications from PC Trouble Shooting and Repair (CompTIA A+) to Networking (CompTIA Net+) to Network Security (CompTIA Security+). We all were in agreement that the general public often acknowledges that Career and Technical Education at the Oakland Schools Technical Campuses is the best kept secret in Oakland County. Hopefully, this show will help to reveal the true treasure that is CTE and no longer will it be kept a secret!

Celebrate Success

As part of my presentations throughout the state, I was in a meeting with one of our State Legislators and we were discussing the topic of informing our government leaders regarding the wonderful success that happens in classrooms daily. Most of the time data are shared in annual reports and do not provide the names and faces of our educational successes. It was suggested that we as educators do more to inform our policy makers about the outstanding achievements of our students and teachers. So, after some thought, I created a section on my website www.paulgalbenski.com to help meet this need. Celebrate Success! is a place to acknowledge all of the wonderful student success stories as well as teachers who have made an impact on the lives of their students. I welcome teachers to share their success stories as we take the time to celebrate the wonderful educational accomplishments that occur each and every day within our classrooms. My goal is to gather these success stories and update our government leaders with a short email or a tweet sharing the fantastic accomplishments achieved by our students and teachers.